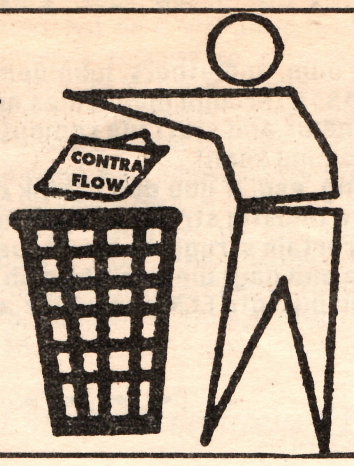
contra FLOW



APRIL / MAY 1995

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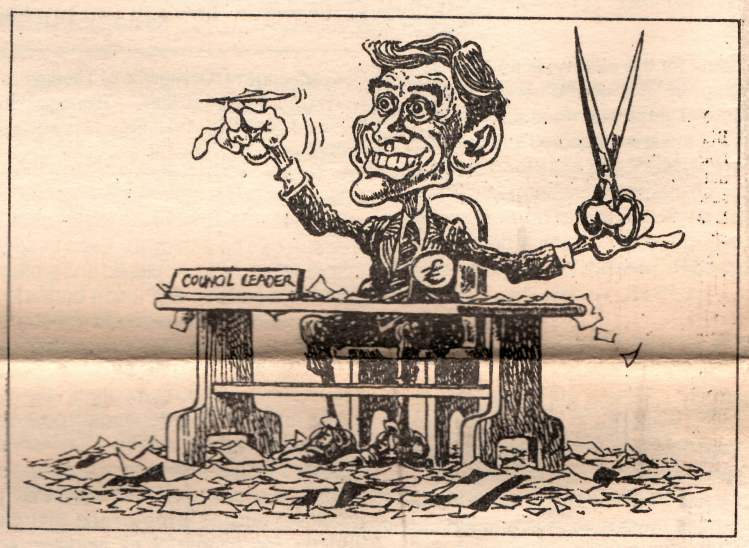
EVERYTHING MUST GO!

Ah, Spring, when all our thoughts turn to...Cuts. Yes, as has become traditional, March and April is the time when local councils work out how much money they need got, what they 've got to spend and who's gonna get cut so the budget balances. Over the last few years, with central government getting meaner and local authorities getting weaker at the knees, we've seen massive cuts in services provided for local people by councils, in council workers' jobs, in funding to the voluntary sector. Inevitably the people who suffer from this are the huge numbers of people who rely on council services: working class people, particularly poorer, older or disabled people. As budgets and workers are cut, council housing gets shittier, libraries, nurseries and community centres close, all sorts of schemes to help make people's lives less of a misery lose their funding.

Councilworkers' jobs are also under threat from government introduced schemes like Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT), which means that councils have to 'contract out 'council work and accept the lowest bid. If the council workforce want to keep their jobs, they have to 'cost less' than any private contractor - an excuse for councils to drive down their wages, conditions etc.



Over the years there has always been resistance, particularly from workers whose jobs are threatened, as well as from community and voluntary groups marked down for cuts. Much of the opposition has taken the form of lobbying, asking the council to think again: especially under Labour councils which often claim they don't like what they're doing but "it's the government's fault". Councilworkers' unions have been pushed into various actions. Minor victories have been scored in the past. Nowadays it seems people are tired and cynical of councils' actions, but have little spirit to fight back.

We've collected just a few local reports from different areas of London (sorry if we missed you out - let us know what's going down!).

LAMBETH Council 'had' to save over £20 million: the hung council decided to cut schools, 3 local libraries, 3 nurseries, 4 old people's homes, as well as the Surrey Hall Community Centre in Stockwell, which ran courses and served as a lcoal drop-in centre. Stockwell now has virtually no community spaces left. The Dexter Square kids playground on Railton Rd was threatened, despite alot of local support; lobbying a council meeting, they pointed out how many burnt-out shops there are on Brixton's old frontline - clearly hinting that it wouldn't be wise to turn local kids out onto the street. Taking the hint, the council reprieved them! A few years ago when libraries were threatened, staff were prepared to occupy them to keep them open: the council backed down. Not this time. Lambeth could have saved some of its debt by not hiring its new Chief Executive, brought in to "clean up corruption" - she is paid.....a year.

LEFTIES FALL OUT

One other victim of the cuts is the council-funded Lambeth Unemployed/ Trade Union Centre, home to local trade unionists, labour groups, some community organisations. Always a bit of a home for lefty groups, the Centre has been occupied since march 7th by Black History for Action and the Militant-dominated Unemployed Action Group (2 of the groups based there), who say they're trying to keep it open. However the local TUC claim they were negotiating a reduced deal from the council to get a smaller centre and say the occupation has fucked this up. The occupiers say they want to keep all services and encourage workers to occupy other threatened buildings. While they've done some good local actions, the U.A.G. are heavily leftified, and do alot of calling on the TUC/Labour to 'give us all proper jobs' - as if. But if you want to support the occupation/get in touch, they're at 12-14 Thornton St, SW9, tel 0171 7337886.

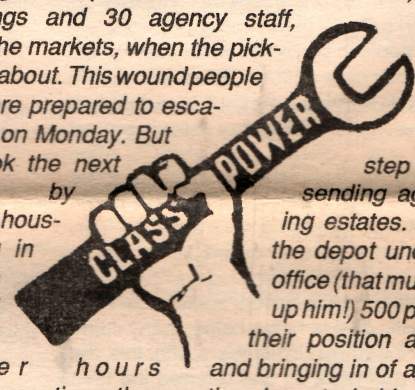
LEWISHAM: The council voted in March to cut wages and conditions for DIRECTeam staff, people like housing repair workers, binmen, school dinnerladies etc. 1000s of wokers now face wage cuts of up to £40 a week, 5 days less holiday a year, and no sick pay for the first 3 days off. Angry council workers demonstrated outside the meeting, and there was some pushing and shoving as the cops tried to remove people who had blocked the main road outside the Town Hall. Two people were nicked and some coppers got injured.

Although in CAMDEN there seem to be no massive cuts in jobs and resources (much of which were decimated last year), council rents are going up by an average of £3.75 a week, 'to pay to keep services'. Or would it be to pay for this year's payrise of between 9 and 19% for managers in the council? Camden council workers got 1.7%. The bosses payrises were announced by the Labour council the same day Tony Blair was slamming the massive bung for the boss of British Gas and other fatcats.

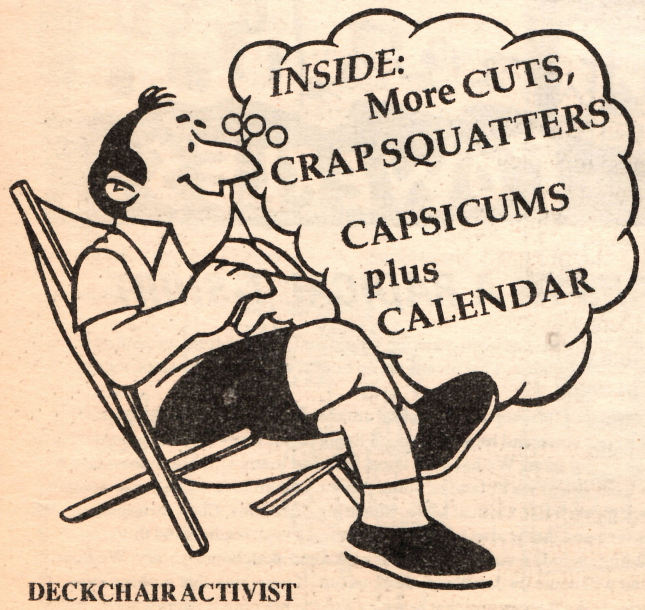
HARINGEY: The council is not making major cuts, though it is losing 54 jobs. There have been some lobbies of the council's HQ, the Civic Centre, over cuts to services for children. 100 people, mainly parents and kids who use the place, protested outside over the threat to close a Family Centre, which was afterwards reprieved. On March 15th there was another protest over an under-5s' centre in Tottenham, where the council had threatened to close the drop-in space and cut the two workers. Haringey Council also plans to introduce charges for services to the disabled; the charges will be means tested, basically if you have any property or savings you will be forced to pay for the community care you receive. These plans aren't widely known, but a campaign to publicise and resist this outrageous idea is hopefully getting off the

HACKNEY WORKERS TURN THE TABLES...

One area where workers put up a fight against cuts and won is HACKNEY in East London, where the council attempted to use Compulsory Competitive Tendering to grind down workers in the Environmental Services Dept of its workforce. Management planned to contract out part of the refuse collecting and streetcleaning, increasing the working week by 5 hours for no extra pay and bringing in agency staff (who were to be paid less than the council's staff). But the workforce were having none of it. In mid-march a shop stewards meeting voted for an overtime ban, which was ratified by a massmeeting of 200 workers from environmental services - which people were threatened with disciplinary action for attending. The ban started on Friday 17th March, and when workers went round to all the yards they got 99% support and participation. On Friday and Saturday 3 refuse depots were picketed. At a big picket on Saturday night, agency staff who managers tried to draft in were largely persuaded not to cross picket line, one or two in fact stayed around to support the action. Early on Sunday morning though the department's assistant director, some of his underlings and 30 agency staff, cleared one of the markets, when the pickets up so weren't about. This wound people late the dispute on Monday. But the Directors took the next step themselves, by sending agency staff out onto housing estates. At a mass meeting in the depot under the Director's office (that must have put the wind up him!) 500 people reaffirmed their position against the longer hours and bringing in of agencies, & voted to continue the overtime ban, to hold more mass pickets the following weekend, and to strike the next week if their demands weren't settled. Union representatives were then sent upstairs to negotiate with the managment, who promptly ***BACKED DOWN!*** *They agreed to withdraw the hours hike and agency staff, on condition that new working practices were accepted, which effectively means workers have to be 'more efficient' in the same hours. The following day another mass meeting of 500 environmental services workers voted to accept the deal and end the ban, but on a temporary basis, with the possibility of future action depending on what develops. UNISON are also balloting for a one-day strike against cuts for 30th March.*



Which just shows you, you can win if you fight! The sense of unity within the environmental services workforce is apparently now brilliant, there is a good atmosphere, and the brief dispute has brought many people together in a way not seen in Hackney for ages. Lets hope it lasts and can be built on.



DECKCHAIR ACTIVIST

TOWER HAMLETS NINE ESCAPE JAIL

Following a continuous and committed campaign the Tower Hamlets 9 Defence Campaign supported by Newham Monitoring Project (NMP) and other groups throughout East London a partial victory was secured; with a reduction of charges resulting in the defendants receiving minimal fines and community service. The Tower Hamlets Nine Defence Campaign was set up by NMP and local youth organisations to support those arrested outside Whitechapel hospital in September 1993 following a vigil in support of Quddus Ali. Quddus Ali following the brutal racist attack is still very ill. The vigil was attacked by the police who began violently arresting some of the local youth resulting in nine youths being arrested and others requiring immediate medical attention for head injuries and beatings. The defendants were charged with Riot and had to face the prospect of up to 10 years for merely attending a vigil in support of Quddus who lay in a coma in Whitechapel hospital.

The level of racial violence by the black community prior and since this incident was even reflected in the Judges' statement prior to sentencing in light of overwhelming evidence. He stated that he realised that there were major external factors, for example the increase of fascist activity, i.e the BNP which resulted in a major increase in racial incidents in the area.

The attack on Quddus was followed by the attack on Mukhtar Ahmed, and followed again by the attack on Shah Alam. The local community remain convinced that when it comes to a choice between criminalising bengali youth for defending themselves, or defending black communities under attack, there is no doubt where the police's priorities lie. How many more attacks will take place and then be quietly forgotten about, with no justice being done? The police's attempt to criminalise and persecute the community for coming out no to the streets in the face of continuing racial violence has been effectively defeated.

•HOW WE DONE IT

We get material for contraFLOW through our own, and others, involvement in events and struggles, through our fax (0171-326-0353), through magazines and through the European Counter Network (an exchange of news and stuff via computer/modem) - watch out for contraFLOW on the internet, coming soon!
We appeal for news from your particular thing, esp. if you don't think our paper covers it. Due to the makeup of the collective (mostly straight white males), and what we are involved in, we recognise that certain struggles aren't well represented (eg. black issues, women's struggles, lesbian and gay) we don't bite so send your shit in! Material that doesn't get on paper may be put into ECN and whizz around the world to groups that would find it useful.

• DISTRIBUTION

You can help distribute contraFLOW by taking bundles of 5, 10, 50 whatever, and putting them about in schools, colleges, gigs, workplaces, demos etc. Send stamps and we can post them to you. Or you can pick them up from

• 56a Infoshop 56 Crampton St, Elephant & Castle, London SE17
Mon, Thu, Fri from 3-7pm

• 121 Books, 121 Railton Road, Brixton, London, SE24 Sat from 1-5pm, Thu 5-8 (but phone first 0171-274-6655)

Or you can recieve the latest issue direct from us via the post and MI5 if you send a stamped addressed envelope. One SAE=one issue, 2 for 2 etc..

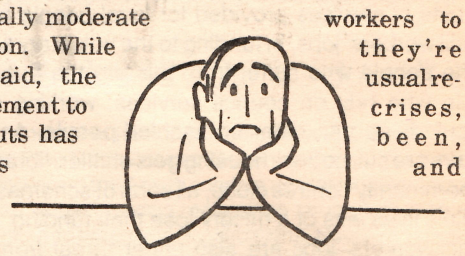
• SPARE CASH?

Tell us about it! If you've got some spare and don't want it, then consider sending it to us. We produce this paper voluntarily and rely on donations. We now accept cheques payable to 'contraflow', as well as ripped off office equipment, computers etc. etc.

HEALTH NOT WEALTH?

...er, not to mention health cuts. Even at the best of times the health service has always been overstretched, and it never really cared for many of our needs despite the fucking brilliantt work done by many not-exactly highly well paid workers. In recent years its got even worse.The number of hospitals round London under threat sounds like, well, a list of all the hospitals in London. Barts Accident and Emergency has closed, the rest of the hospital is being run down. The Queen Elizabeth Childrens Hospital and the London Chest hospital in Bethnal Green are both set for closure, despite massive local campaigning. Oldchurch Hospital in Romford is to have its casualty unit, one of the biggest in London, handling 70, 000 cases a year, moved to a distant site up by the M25: probably to be followed by the closure of the rest of the hospital. The Brook and Greenwich Hospitals in Greenwich are to combine onto one site. Guys has had its casualty reprieved until 1999, but the rest of the services are to go. Meanwhile the Edgeware Hospital in North London is under threat, despite a huge local Hands off Our Hospital campaign, which seems to have been ignored by the Health Authority. Doubt hangs over the hospitals of South West London, awaiting a report thats been 18 months in coming, expected to point out some for closure. Two that have been reprieved are the Chase Farm Hospital in Enfield and the Central Middlesex Hospital in Wembley. Chase Farm was recommended for closure by an auditors report, but a campaign pre-empted the health Authority, who decided to keep it open onin the end. The Central Middlesex was set to be closed by the Health Authority, but local pressure forced them to back down.

Meanwhile, the stingy pay awards offered to nurses and midwives is leading traditionally moderate workers to consider industrial action. While they're overworked and underpaid, the usual response of hospital management to crises, bed shortages, funding cuts has been, yes to hire more managers and give them bigger pay rises. The Health Service shows up the loopy side of capitalism at it's worst - how can you run healthcare for profit?



And so I tell you not to worry (12.22)

Get your copy of 'Occupational Therapy', a brill new pamphlet history of the University College Hospital strike/occupations of 1992-4, written by people involved. .£1.50 inc P&P from News from Everywhere, Box 14, 136 Kingsland High St, London, E8.

and what can be afforded and not on people's needs.

Where people do have the will to resist, as in Hackney, it's easy to see that alot can be achieved. Even in aother boroughs it's obvious that places which have mobilised and protested have often fo0rced a backdown or a rethink. But union bureaucracies are divided and weak-kneed, many councilworkers are scared and isolated, and people in the community are often sceptical of the 'lefties' who inevitably try to take over anti-cuts campaigns. Left groups are calling for strikes, occupations, 'united campaigns', but all-too often they want to control things and fuck up independent organising.

In a leaflet handed out on a Lewisham anti-cuts demo, the Public Services Workers Network, ('a group of syndicalist council, health and voluntary sector workers') said that we should be organising for ourselves outside of the unions, that 'public services should be run by and for the benefit of all workers, and that bureaucrats are just parasites on this process'. This is true, though it's easier said than done. For a start though, the victory against managers in Hackney shows that if workers organise, whether it's in the union or not, cuts can be halted. At the very least we should be trying to build links between community and workers, hopefully without being taken over and manipulate by cynical lefty groups, so that users can support strikes etc, and workers can prevent our needs being ignored. Pie in the sky, maybe, but otherwise the cuts will just carry on happening. It's a long shot, but it might just work!

Thanks alot to everyone who gave us info for this round-up.

Continued from front page...

ground soon. Contact: Action Against Charges, Rachael 0181 801 5757

NEWHAM Council has said it has to make 'savings' of £6 million: this has already meant rent increases for council tenants, cuts in the maintenance of parks etc. (A barmy scheme to concrete over kiddies' pools in parks has been floated, this would apparently save £8000!). Homes for OAPs and problem kids are also set to shut. In early March library staff went out on a half day strike in protest at threats of cuts - despite one UNISON shop steward telling his members not to support the strike. The Tom Allen Centre in Stratford, a voluntary theatre group that's done work with local kids, has also been voted to be cut by the Labour group; the centre mobilised some of the kids, who came to a lobby and gave the councillors some stick! After threats of drastic cuts to home helps, many came down to lobby the council in numbers: after this, the council backed down a bit and referred the idea back for rethinking. One local councillor who has been voting for cuts gets £8000 a year from sitting on the board of the London Docklands Development Corporation, which has destroyed much of East London's docklands communities to redevelop the area as a paradise for business and yuppies. A bright spark has suggested he donate some of this blood money to help the council out with its cashflow problems. Hopefully councilworkers will be taking up resistance to the cuts, following the lead of a worker in social services who was disciplined after she burst in in a management meeting and tried to strangle an especially nasty manager!

In **HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM** council rents are going up £3.50 a week across the borough, after the council left them low last year, just before local elections! The council's housing dept is due to be put out to CCT in 1997, but managers have been putting the frighteners on people, to the tune of "we've all got to work harder to keep our jobs". (Managers? Work?) People are keeping their heads down, which can have unfortunate consequences. A worker in emergency housing was sacked in March after a'disciplinary offence'. His real crime seems to be that when he was threatened with the sack last year colleagues went on strike in support of him, earning him managers' enmity. Sadly this time, many people were not ready to stand up for him again.

In **REDBRIDGE** in East London the hung (you wish!) council has agreed on cuts of £8 million, but not where to chop. Social services and education are going to be spared, although they did threaten a daycare centre for people with learning difficulties - until a lobby of the council of 60 or 70 users, parents and other supporters. They could lose up to 115 jobs, but this has not been decided yet.

Cuts in the **BRIGHTER BOURGH**; a week doesn't go by without **WANDSWORTH** council cutting something (thier throats would be a start). One of the more recent attacks (after being the only London bourgh to vote against free train travel for the elderly) is on the Alton Adult Education Centre in Roehampton. The centre serves people living on the Alton estate, the biggest post war housing estate in europe, which has been sucked dry of the few amenities that did exist and reduced to a mini police state with CCTV and kops tooling round day and night. The adjacent junior school is closing in the summer, which gives the council an ideal opportunity to flog both sites together. The local users have got together a 200 name petition, for all the good it'll do!

LESSON LESS EDUCATION

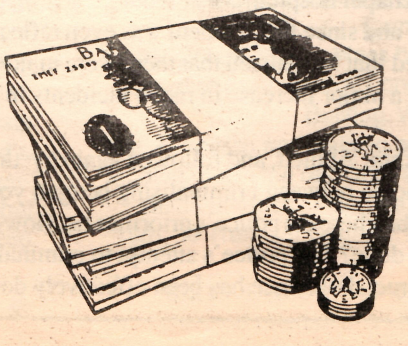
In London Community Colleges are under attack. The further education available in Community colleges is of vital importance to many working class people: the courses they tend to run, building, computers, literacy, etc are often the only chance many people have at learning beyond school, and tend to teach people skills that help people to survive. Eg, alot of people on the dole can do dead cheap courses (I know, I have!), many refugees learn english in community colleges, etc. But there's a drive to deny any education to working class people on this country unless its educating us for crap jobs or the dole. Nationally, along with a plan to get rid of free school education by introducing a voucher system, there's talk of reducing the hours dole claimants can do at college without getting dole reduced from 21 to 16 per week. Plus community colleges around London are facing funding cuts from the FEFC, the Quango that gives them money, and as a result managers are wasting jobs and courses. At Hackney College something like 130 jobs could go in support staff and lecturers. Lecturers there are striking one day a week. Management at Southwark College have axed 38 jobs and more are threatened. This has led to an all-out strike by members of NATFHE (lecturers union) there, supported by many students who will obviously be suffering if the cuts go through. The Students Union has been threatened for supporting the strike. For more info or support phone the strikers on 0171 401 7374.

WHAT ARE WE TRYING TO SAY?

Now that's cheered you up eh? We didn't print it just to make you miserable. Cuts like these have going on for some years, and look set to continues - things are going to get worse. Unless you're on the receiving end it may seem like just a list on paper, but each cut can have devastating effects on people's lives - usually to people who can least cope with it; people who are vulnerable, need support, have liitle access to resources anyway. Basically its a barmy system where vital needs are regulated on the basis of profit

BANK JOB

Last September 5 anarchists in Italy got nicked after a failed bank job, including our very own Jean Weir (a long time anarchist, involved in the mag InsurrectionElephantPress,andmany other projects). 3 got sentenced to 5 years, one to 6 years, and one got off. The cops and media are trying to connect up the event to the spectre of terrorism and claim for the 4 another two earlier bank jobs,which they deny. A statement from the 4 convicted says: "We are anarchist individuals moved by a common sentiment of liberty. Our personal need for money has never found satisfaction in exploitation, whether of ourselves or others. We decided to direct our attention towards a bank, we all know the responsibilities of such structures.The action we have carried out is therefore to be considered as an act of reappropriation for personal need.We tried and it went badly." So, kids, next time you need a bit of spare cash, plan it properly.



Jean Weir, Antonio Budini, Christos Stratigopoulos and Carlo Tesseri are being held at Carcere di Trento, via Pilati 6, 38100, Trento, Italy.

FOUR YEARS IN A RADICAL T-SHIRT

For nearly four years now, the 56a Infoshop has been cranking out radical goodies from a squatted Council building in Elephant and Castle, South London. That means cheap books, magazines, posters, records, T-shirts and stuff.

This March we finally refurbished half the shop into an actual archive section and reading space. This means that anyone (you included) can come and browse through hundreds of mags from all over the planet and beyond and not even spend a penny there. We have the latest issues of many U.K alternative mags, plus titles from all over the world to from Brazil via Poland to South Africa. Our archive section also contains subject files so you can read back on stuff like Critical Mass, Squatting, Elections, Class Struggles etc. We also collect sex and queer zines. Tea and that is also available to lubricate your reading and thinking.

Our Summer plans for the building include a video library and a bike and skateboard library. We hope every Contraflow reader who can will come on down and check us out. If you think that nothing ever changes, then come and be suprised. We'll show you that resistance to the big plan is everywhere ! Better believe it.

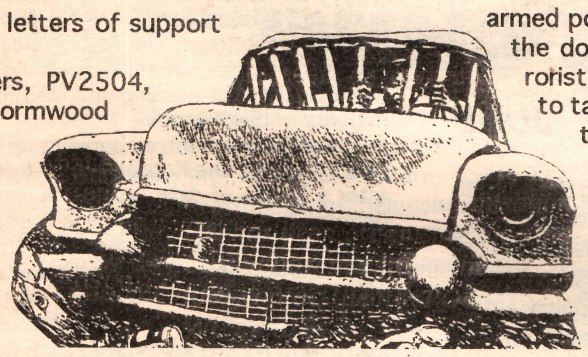
@N @RCHIVE 56A INFOSHOP, 56 CRAMPTON ST, LONDON SE17

MOTORWAY MADNESS

Jim Chambers, a long-time campaigner against the M11 motorway extension in East London, has been remanded in prison, after he and another person were arrested and charged with committing criminal damage worth £50,000 on a road construction site. He is being held in Wormwood Scrubs Prison awaiting trial, which could be some months away. At one point Jim's lawyers successfully challenged his bail conditions, only for the prosecution to appeal, on which they were restored. Obviously they want to nail him.

Please write letters of support to:

Jim Chambers, PV2504, HMP Wormwood Scrubs, Du Cane Rd, London, W12 0AE.



As Jim is on remand he can also receive visits most days, if you are into visiting him please ring Angie on 081 556 0290.

NICK NICKED

Nick Jeffreys is currently in prison in Holland, awaiting a court hearing for his extradition to Britain. When he was nicked earlier this year in Amsterdam, the british government asked for his extradition to face serious charges from the March 1990 Trafalgar Square anti-poll tax uprising. They say he will be charged with Riot, Violent Disorder (Sections 1 & 2 of the Public Order Act), Grievious Bodily Harm, Actual Bodily Harm. An attempted murder charge has been abandoned. That he will be extradited soon seems pretty certain.

At the moment Nick is in Amsterdam's Hoorn Prison, and would welcome letters, but if/when he is moved here, we will keep you posted of his whereabouts and his ongoing situation.

Nick Jeffreys, Hoorn Prison, Amsterdam, Holland

THE ENEMY WITH(OUT)

With the collapse of the Soviet Bloc, the IRA ceasefire etc, the 'Intelligence Community', MI5/6 and co, are looking to the Middle East to justify their existence. Kurdish, palestinian, islamic terrorists are to be the new enemy within.

Two Palestinians who have lived for several years in London, Nadia Zekra and Jawad Botmeh, have been arrested under the PTA and charged with conspiracy to cause explosions. They insist they are totally innocent..

In apparent coordination with Israeli intelligence, the British authorities have also been interrogating Palestinians in London - and their employers - about their political beliefs. Action for the Rights of Arabs in Britain is a new campaign established to oppose this harassment. ARAB aim to publicise and oppose this, and provide support for those who are harassed. As well as calling for the charges against Nadia and Jawad to be dropped, they will produce a pamphlet in Arabic and English explaining rights and set up a legal advice 'Hotline'.

Contact: ARAB, 25 Horsell Rd, London N5.

In August 1994, Cafer Kovaycin, Hikmet Bozat and Zerzet Ozen were convicted of petrol-bombing Turkish banks in London and were sentenced to 15, 15 and 12 years in prison respectively. All three are kurds who had sought political asylum in Britain. The press heralded them as "dangerous middle eastern terrorists"; the judge recommended their deportation to Turkey at the end of their sentences - basically a death sentence! They've been used as an example to any kurds and turks in Britain who oppose the UK's support for Turkey's war against the kurds and repression against its own working class.

Cafer Kovaycin was subsequently brutally attacked in Swaleside prison on October 10th; two prisoners poured boiling oil on him. He suffered severe burns to his face, back and arms. He was taken to hospital by armed police, chained by his legs, the doctors told he was a 'terrorist'. Seven hospitals refused to take him. He was returned to prison after just two weeks - he has not received proper care. Hikmet Bozat was also threatened with attack. Meanwhile their appeal has been turned down....

Send letters of support to:

Cafer Kovaycin, HMP Swaleside, Brabazon Rd, Eastchurch, Kent, ME12 4DZ;
Hikmet Bozat, HMP Long lartin, South Littleton, Evesham, Worcs, WR11 5TZ;
Zerzet Ozen, HMYOI Aylesbury, Bierton Rd, Aylesbury, Bucks.

In October Kani Yilmaz, the european representative of the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK), a group resisting Turkish rule in Kurdistan, was arrested in Britain on his way to talk to MPs in Parliament! He is being detained here as a "threat to National Security", although in the previous 18 months he'd been to Britain 5 times. 'Usually' such threats are instantly deported, but he is still being held, pending Germany's request to extradite him to face charges of being a member of the PKK - recently criminalised there. Having spent ten years in prison in Turkey, tortured and brutalised, Kani Yilmaz hardly expected to end up inside here.

For more info or to get involved in support for the kurds, contact, Kurdish Information Centre, 10 Glasshouse Yard, London, EC1A 4JN. Tel 0171 250 1315.

Emma Humphreys Update

In January the appeal court granted Emma a chance to appeal against her conviction for killing her violent partner. Originally she had unknowingly signed away her entitlement to an appeal but it is now recognised that at the time her state of mind meant that she didn't understand what she was doing. Her supporters are currently awaiting a trial date and developing her defence.

Write to her at Holloway Prison, Parkhurst Rd, London, N7.

DEFIANCE!

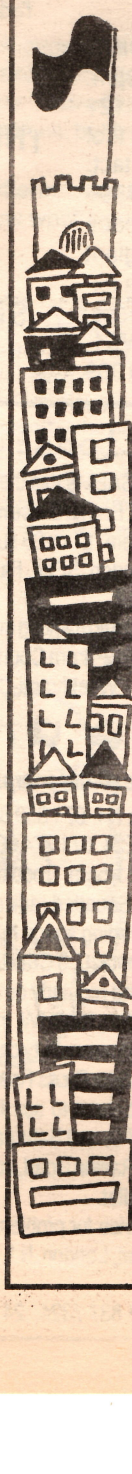
March 4th saw three (sadly dull) demos in the London area against the Criminal Justice Act, organised by the Coalition against the CJA. In North London, about 1000 people marched from Stoke Newington Copshop to Tottenham Copshop (livened up by the Hackney Squatters with their fire-breathing and home-made PA system); 200-odd people marched around Brixton, and there was also a march in Uxbridge. The thrust of the demos was protesting especially against two of the Act's incoming clauses, the new Stop and Search powers for the police, and against the 'abolition of the Right to Silence'. The search powers, widely seen as reviving the racist SUS laws of the 70s, are reportedly already being used, surprise, surprise, to harass young black people on the street.

*The black and asian organisation **Panther UK** has been organising meetings and encouraging resistance to the Return of the SUS laws, contact them at **PO Box 340, London, WC1V 8JT.***

The 'right to silence' change comes in on April 10th. Contrary to the propaganda though, it does not completely get rid of a suspect's rights to say nothing. The filth still can't legally force you to talk to them in the Station (though they might tell you otherwise): what the change means is that if you refuse to speak, this can be brought up in court and may be used as evidence against you. BUT, the best advice if you want to get off is still to SAY NOTHING. The time to work out a defence is afterwards, in your own time, not under pressure from the cops. Make sure you get a decent solicitor and don't let them bullshit you.

*More sound advice and practical tips for defendants in police custardy can be found in the brilliant booklet **"No Comment - the Defendants Guide to Arrest"**, now updated for the CJA, available for an SAE (or a donation for a few copies) from **London ABC, 121 Railton Rd, London, SE24.***

CRAP SQUATTERS ON THE STREETS



With no squat centre in Hackney since before Xmas and loads of ex-squatters isolated and bored in their new hard-to-let council tenancies or refugees in other boroughs, a few bods kept talking about how we needed to open somewhere up. A meeting was organised at which everyone said, yeah, good idea and it was left to the few bods to get it together and then invite everyone round on the new phone tree. Of course it wasn't quite so simple.

How not to squat

3 of us picked a place and got in, with not much in the way of tools. We couldn't secure the place very well, just blocking the locks, and didn't want to try out the leccy in case lots of big lights came on outside, so after a bit the tension, damp, dark and cold, and strange noises got to us, and two of us decided that staying the night was pointless. The other was not persuaded and decided to stay, but when we got back in the morning he was obviously regreting it. What we needed then was to get together with a few other people to decide whether the leccy could be organised and whether the place was what we wanted, before calling in everyone else, but we hadn't organised for such a group and people who might have been useful weren't in, and then the phone tree got activated. After a few hours a few people had turned up but we were again cold, damp, stressed and tired, while outside the sun shone, so again we abandoned the place.

Getting it Right

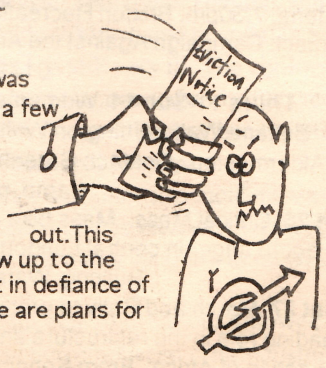
At a nearby flat with warmth, drugs and music, we eventually managed to gather people, organise tasks and get a new message on the phone tree saying what we needed and to turn up the next evening... when, miraculously, the place was full of people cleaning, sorting out the leccy, chatting and getting things together.

For three weeks the Pigasus thrived with cafes, meetings, artworks, kids & parents sessions etc. till one morning, when nobody was in due to some arsehole trying to attack the only guy who was staying there permanently, builders came and repossessed. It was probably lucky that nobody was in as it seems they would have used violence against anyone who was there. Two days later we took a new place, that wasn't so dark damp and cold, and people were actually willing to stay there. Again much fun was organised and again it looked like 3 weeks was going to be all we got, when the court summons came through. Fortunately the owners, Peabody (the "housing charity") left us a loophole that we used to get a ten day adjournment, and some very nasty looks from their lawyer which raised our confidence enough to carry on.

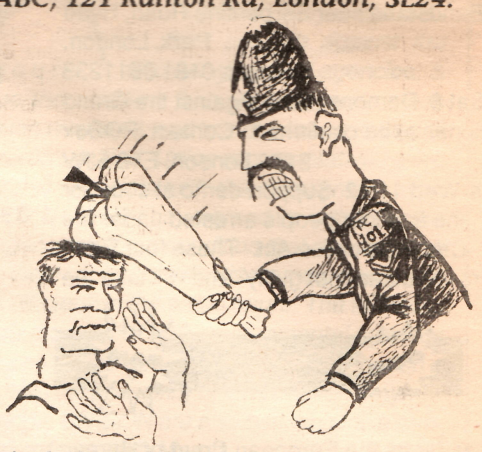
If we can do it, so can you.

By the way, the guy who pleaded guilty to opening the Hackney Town Hall door to let demonstrators in is having to pay up over a thousand quid to replace it. Hackney have plenty of steel doors available but this wouldn't fit their plans to gentrify the area and build an opera house opposite!!!! Any contributions should be sent to the Hackney 7 Defence Campaign, c/o Colin Roach Centre, 56 Clarence Rd, E5

The squat centre in Brighton was evicted on friday a few days after the bailiffs turned up, saw everyone on the roof and chickened out. This squat was a follow up to the courthouse squat in defiance of the CJA and there are plans for another



If people want to help crack the next one call Justice? on 01273-685913

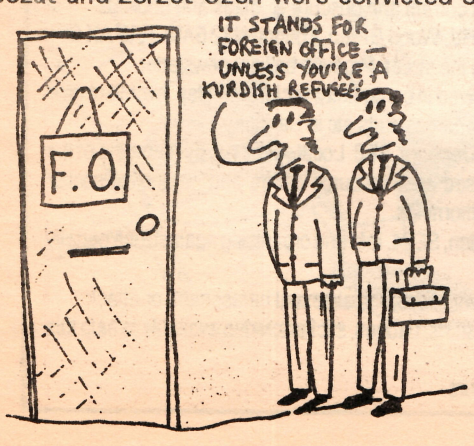


PEPPER ASSAULT

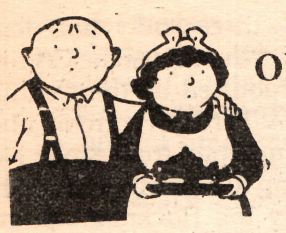
Moves by british police forces to introduce the anti personnel weapon capsicum (pepper) gas are well underfoot. What hasn't been so publicised is the range of dangers associated with this weapon - particularly for people with asthma or heart conditions.

A report from the South California Civil Liberties Union has documented 14 deaths associated with pepper gas in the first year of its use there. From Kansas city comes reports from as far back as 1990 that capsicum gas "caused the subjects breathing passages to swell and constrict." Interestingly, because the spray does not leave bruises it has also become the torture instrument of choice for many of the more psychotic US police officers where it has been used at picket lines, against homeless people and in prisons.

Info from CARPET, PO Box 1512 Collingwood, 3066, Australia.



WHAT'S ON



OH! DEAR JIM !

APRIL

Sat 1-Fri 7 Earth Nights Everywhere, the elves come out, intent in sabotage and revenge. Watch out - it's up to us...

Sat April Fools Day National Day of Action, the A30 Road Protest, Mass Trespass. Meet at 10am at the Fairmile site for fun and fools day frolics, party in the evening. Bring cake, instruments, and mead! Contact: 0385 278157 or 0385 278156

Sat 1st Dead By Dawn..all-nite techno-speed-core-gabber party at 121 Railton Rd, Brixton London. SE24 Doing it for the kids from 11pm (discussion at 9pm) at this Asprin-free zone. Blimey!

Mon 3 Remember Tom Worby (murdered Hunt Sab), Hunt Sab Association. Contact: 0602 590357

Mon 3 *"The Burston School Strike"*, a video of the longest running strike in history, with possibly a discussion afterwards. Red and Black Club, 7 Theatre Place, 489a New Cross Rd, SE14. 8pm.

Wed 5 Campaign Against the Child Support Act holds a picket of the Agency's Headquarters at Millbank in London and other Regional Centres. contact: 0171 8377509

Sat 8 Events and demos against Child Support Act throughout the U.K.. Details contact: Campaign Against the Child Support Act, 0171 8377509

Sat 8- Mon 17 Youth CND (Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament) Week of Action. Contact YCND for details: 0171 6073616.

Sat 8 *"Dancing with Zapata"* (he was a fucking HOT dancer, but not as hot as I bet Subcomandante Marcos is. Dang that man is sexy. Is it just the balaclava, or what?) In solidarity with the people of Chiapas. Mexican food and drinks... Latin America House, Kingsgate Place, London NW6 (Kilburn Park Tube) £3 Contact: Mexico Solidarity Group, 0171 3725244

Sat 8 Vegetarian and Vegan Families Picnic, noon, Bandstand near Serpentine Road, Hyde Park, London. Contact: 0181 8611233

Sat 8 Demonstration Against the Grand National, to be confirmed. Contact: POBox 3152 London, E12 5JW

Tues-Wed 11/12 Support demo at court for the first four people arrested under the Criminal Justice Act. These four Earth Firstlers will plead "not guilty" and will take the

case as far as the European Court of Human Rights if need be. Meet outside the Manchester Magistrates Court, 9am. Contact: Manchester EF!, 0161 .2744665.

Thurs 13-Mon 17 Earth First! gathering @ Colly Moor Farm, Coleshill Village, between Highworth and Farringdon. Contact: 0635 521770

Fri 14-Mon 17 Aldermasten to London Demo. Young people will be marching from Britain's nuclear bomb factory to parliament, with parties, music, demos, etc. along the route. Contact: Youth CND on 0171 6073616

Fri 14-Sun 16 The A30 Road Protest *Barricading Weekend*. Help is needed to build barricades, fences, and dig a moat, to defend the remaining trees and wildlife at eh Fairmile and Allercombe sites. Bring tools and instruments, party on Friday and Saturday nights. Contact: 0385 278157

Sat 15 International Day of Action Against McDonald's, to protest against 40 years of junk food, the exploitation of people, animals and the environment and to celebrate ten years of coordinated international protests and resistance. **Picket local McDonald's everywhere.** *"Let's make this an anniversary to remember."* Contact: McLibel Support Campaign, 0171 7131269

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Sun 16 Exploding Cinema Video, film, music, performance... The Loughborough Hotel, Loughborough Road, Brixton SW9. 7pm til late. £3. Contact: 095 6823712

Mon 17 One World Picnic and March through London, and mass CD- Marble Arch, 1pm. Welcoming the marchers from Aldermaston. Contact: Youth CND on 0171 6073616.

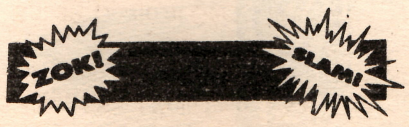
Thurs 20 Protest Against British-Saudi "Al-Yamamah" Arms Deal, Oxford Street, London, 12.30pm-2. No contact.

Thurs 20 Open meeting on prisons and prisoner support. "Come along and find out why we don't like prisons, how you can support those inside, and how the so-called justice system is used to oppress us all." 8pm at the Red and Black Club, 7 Theatre Place, 489a New Cross Road, SE14.

23-30th Week long occupation of a soon-to-be-well-known site, South England. Coaches leave from Cooltan, 372 Coldharbor Lane, Brixton, 10am on the 23. Contact: Land Reform, Box E, 111 Magdalen Rd, Oxford, OX4 1RQ, email: eartharcagn.apc.org.

Mon 24 Red and Black club shows video "Viva Villa", and there will be information on the current events in Chiapas, Mexico, as well as discussion. 8pm, Red and Black Club, 7, Theatre Place, 489a New Cross Road, SE14

Thurs 27 Start of new monthly forums, *"On the Road to Beijing: Forums preparing for the UN Fourth World Conference on Women"*. Topics include "Sex, Race and Class": the "New Movements"; "Caught in the Act" (the Child Support Act and the



Criminal Justice Act); and "Sex Workers, Sexual Choices, and Sexual Violence". All forums are 7.30-9.30pm, 230a Kentish Town Road, NW5. Wheelchair accessible, induction loop, sign language interpreter to be confirmed. Contact: Kings Cross Women's Cntr, 0171 8377509.

Fri 28 Critical Mass, mass bike and skateboard anger in central London. Meet in the Bullring, Waterloo, 5.45pm.

Fri 28-Mon 1 Shut Sellafield! Peace camp, vigil, party and direct action. Contact: 0706 371387.

Sat 29 Demo at Campsfield gates, to demand release of all immigration detainees. Contact: Campaign Against Campsfield, 0865 724452

Sat 29 Manchester Demo Against Deportation. Okolo Family Defense Campaign. No further details before print, no contact.

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MAY

Mon 1 Parade at the end of a two week Coalition against the Criminal Justice Act carnival. Also Mayday free festival on Clapham Common. No contact at time of publication.

Thurs 4 Protest British Aerospace AGM, Marriot Hotel, Grosvenor Square. Protest at 1pm, AGM at 2.30. Contact: Campaign Against the Arms Trade, 0171 2810297

Sat 11 Dead By Dawn, all night techno-speedcore-gabba party at 121 Centre, 121 Railton rd, Brixton, SE24.. With discussion at 9pm, and dancig from 11 till the early hours..

Tues 9 Public meeting on arms trade and Nigeria, 7.30pm, Brixton Recreation Centre. Contact: Campaign Against the Arms Trade, 0171 2810297.

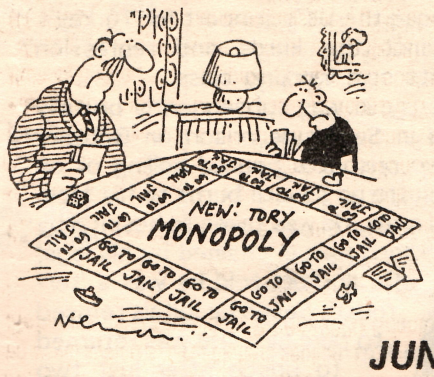
Thurs 11-Sun 14 Women's Action - a Beltane Walk. Uffington White Horse to Aldermaston. Contact: Greenham Peace Camp, no number.

Fri 26 Critical Mass. Mass bike and skateboard anger in central London. Meet the Bullring, Waterloo, 5.45.

Sat 27 March and Rally to protest Britain's leading role in the restructure and recolonization of Africa. From Kennington Park, 1pm, to Trafalgar Square. Contact: 0171 9249033.

Sat 27 Demo at Campsfield gates, to demand release of all immigration detainees. Contact: Campaign Against Campsfield, 0865 724452.

Mon 29 The Return of Maidstone Green Fair II. Stands, stalls, juggling, music, dance, crafts, alternative technology powered stage and much, much more, to raise awareness and highlight the positive aspects of the Green movement. Noon-8pm, Mote Park, Maidstone. Contact: 19 Shortlands Green, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 9HD.



JUNE

Thurs 1 Big Action in planning for the 10th Anniversary of the "Battle of the Beanfield", when rampaging riot police destroyed the Peace convoy heading for Stonehenge. Contact: Stonehenge Campaign, c/o 99 Torriano Ave, London NW5 2RX

Sat 3 Stonehenge Walk starts. Contact Stonehenge Campaign, see above.

Sat 3 Dead By Dawn, all night technospeed-core-gabba party at 121 Centre, 121 Railton rd, Brixton, SE24.. With discussion at 9pm, and dancig from 11 till the early hours..

Sat 10 Day of Action on arms sales to Nigeria. The 12th is the second anniversary of the annulmento of the elections. Since then, Britain has completed delivery of an order for Vickers main battle tanks. Local activities across the country. Contact: Campaign Against the Arms Trade, 0171 281 0297.

Mon 15-17 Liberty Human Rights Convention. Contact: Liberty, 0171 3578689.

Sat 24 National Day of Action outside detention centres and prisons to demand release of all immigration detainees. Contact: Campaign Against Campsfield, 0865 724452

Fri 30 Critical Smash. Mass bicycle and skateboard anger in central London. Meet at the Bullring, Waterloo, 5.45pm

ONGOING

Tues & Thurs 121 Centre Cafe, 7 - 9pm. Cheap! You should go. Then go to the 121 bookshop Thurs 5-8 and Sat 1-5 too!

M-11 Actions happening regularly. Contact: 0181.5274896

McLibel Trial of two London Greenpeace activists under attack from food giant McDonalds for telling the truth about it's exploitative, unhealthy, capitalist nastiness. Most days at the High Court, the Strand, WC1. Contact: 0171 713 1269

INTERNATIONAL STUFF

SQUATTING

- In the centre of Paris an empty school and flats have been taken over Droit au Logement (right to housing) to house hundreds of homeless families and individuals and as office space for themsleves, Action Chomeurs (unemployed action) and others. The squat, in Rue du Dragon, has been safe because competitors for election to president have suddenly become nice to the homeless, and the place was given 6 months in court. Rallies are held across the road in the square outside St Germain du Pres every Sunday afternoon. The place even survived a visit from the Squash lager louts! Another, more squatscene type place has been opened up in a factory in the city.
- The Spanish state is trying to bring in new laws on lots of things, including squatting.
- In South Africa squatting is no longer just in the shanty towns but has developed into a major movement taking over blocks of flats. The ANC are claiming that squatters are inspired and controlled by reactionary elements - since joining the government they have done nothing about the massive need for housing and land for the vast majority of black people.
- There's squat centres popping up in Croatia. One in Zagreb, the Kuglana, was raided by cops after a couple of days (everyone was too busy pogoing to have security organised) and non-Croatians nicked. A skin, when asked his nationality, proudly answered "Skinhead" and was promptly nicked.

PRACTICE SAFER STRIKES

Encouraging [although dated] news of resistance in the Free Trade Zones of Sri Lanka. For two years 1500 workers at the Ansell condom and latex glove factory had waged a union recognition struggle despite arrests and police attacks on pickets, along with solidarity actions by workers across the FTZ in Biaygoma near Colombo.

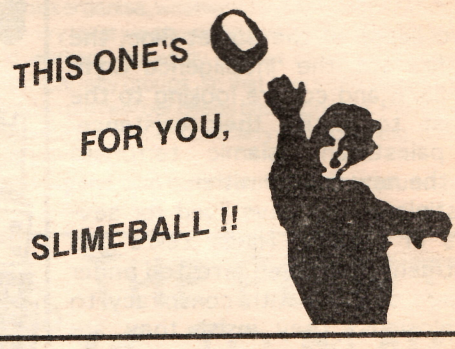
Mid July 1994 saw the workers turn the tables on the bosses lock out tactics when the they locked [well, barricaded] management into the factory. This quickly had the desired effect - but once the barricades were lifted 36 arrests were made and at the time of writing these workers were still being held on remand.

Ansell is part of the Pacific Dunlop group - other of its brand names are Goodyear and Lifestyle.

Info from AAWL, P.O Box 264 Fitzroy 3065, Australia

TOTAL HARASSMENT

A boss in a Las Vegas has come up with a novel defence against a sexual harassment charge brought against him. This wanker says he harasses all his workers - regardless of sex, colour or sexual preference! It gives one an inner glow of faith in the bourgeois legal system [not] that this was dismissed by the US federal appeals court.



Interesting Publications: *longer list available for SAE y'all*

Bad Attitude, 121 Railton Rd, London SE24 (£1/SAE). Is this the best radical women's newspaper in the UK or not? Articles about women's struggles in Mexico, Eritrea, Burma & elsewhere plus direct action news at Menwith Hill spybase, disability rights protests, menopause and loads more. £1 or £5 subs for 6 issues.

Taking Liberties, London ABC, 121 Railton rd, London, SE24. Fab new issue of the prisoners' support bulletin. 70p inc P&P or subscribe for £3 a year unwaged, £5 waged.

2600 The Hacker Quarterly, Detailed and witty mag into hacking everything from computers to cash machines to phones to travel systems. Great letters section. £3.50 inc P&P from Counter Productions, PO Box 556, London, SE5 0RL.

Schnews, c/o On the Fiddle, PO Box 2600, Brighton. Weekly anti-CJA newssheet. Brill news updates. Donations or SAE.

Contacts: *here are only a few of the sound groups around London, send us an SAE for a longer list.*

- **Advisory Service for Squatters**, 2 St Pauls Rd, N1, 071 359 8814. Mon-Fri, 2-6pm. Practical advice, the law etc.
- **121 Centre**, 121 Railton Rd, Brixton, London, SE24. 071 274 6655. Squatted anarchist space: bookshop, meetings, parties, squatting, free info. Open Thu 5-8pm, Sat 1-5pm. Good cheap cafe Tues and Thu 7-9pm. Yummysville!!
- **56a Info Shop**, 56 Crampton St, London SE17. Squatted radical bookstore and more. Open Mon, Thurs, Fri, 3-7pm. Action, books, mags, records, posters and cool reading space full of current and obscure @ mags and booklets.
- **Direct Action Network** (London and national contact), 3 Crawley Rd, Wood Green, London N22 6AN. Tel/FAX 081 889 1361. Disability rights organisation, militant and regularly out on the street. Produce briiliant newsletter.
- **Haringey Solidarity Group**, PO Box 2474, London, N8 0HW. Involved in community/social struggles, excellent new 'Community Action' newsletter out now, with info on community care charges, cuts etc in Haringey.
- **Red and Black Club**, Unit 7, Theatre Place, 489 New Cross Road, Deptford, SE8. Local space run by members of the Solidarity Federation (anarcho-syndicalists), who want to see it used as a resource centre and organising/social/resistance space. Open Monday/Tuesday eves, 7-9, and Saturday mornings. .
- **FareDodgers Liberation Front**, Box FDLF, 121 Railton Road, London, SE24. Info and organising against tube penalty fares, well in fact any fares. Send SAE for info leaflet.
- **CAPA** 0171 729 2652. 24 hour Help/ Legal Advice for problems with cops, racial/sexual harassment or attack.
- **McLibel Support Campaign**, 5 Caledonian Road, London, N1. T-shirts, badges, stickers, video available to help this monumental legal fight against McDonalds.
- **London Lesbian and Gay Switchboard**, 0171 837 7324. 24 hours.